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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CRS, EUR/RPM  
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SUBJECT: NEW GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS HELP PRT KUNDUZ REGAIN THE  
INITIATIVE

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The arrival of both a German airborne infantry company and additional reconnaissance assets has increased PRT Kunduz's ability to provide security and conduct reconstruction activities in Kunduz province. The new company has disrupted insurgent attacks and discovered weapons caches. As a result, the PRT is now in a better position to counter the insurgency's spring activities. The German PRT's military leadership understands that this pro-active posture requires a greater willingness to accept casualties in pursuit of success. No decision has yet been reached on whether the airborne company will be replaced when they depart at the end of June 2008.

¶2. (SBU) In 2007 there was a significant increase in insurgent activity in Kunduz province, both in quantity and quality of attacks. A May 19 suicide attack that killed three German soldiers prompted the PRT to cease foot patrols in Kunduz city and tighten vehicle movement restrictions. The October 5 suicide attack in Chahar Dara that wounded two German soldiers demonstrated that not only Kunduz city was dangerous. Nine rocket attacks in the fourth quarter resulted in "hardening" of temporary housing facilities. The German force protection elements were occupied responding to threats, rather than escorting civil-military affairs teams, human intelligence and information operations elements into the field.

¶3. (SBU) In response, Berlin dispatched a 200-strong airborne infantry company to neutralize the threats and regain the initiative. The paratroopers are responsible for the PRT's near-perimeter security, freeing up existing force protection units to accompany patrols into the districts. Additional mixed reconnaissance assets arrived to improve overall situational awareness.

¶4. (SBU) With the Kunduz reinforcements and the summer arrival of the Quick Reaction Force in Mazar-e Sharif, Germany will brush up against its maximum authorized contingent size of 3,500 in Afghanistan. The PRT has already been asked to eliminate 25 positions of the authorized 650.

¶5. (SBU) Since its arrival at the end of February, the airborne company has disrupted several insurgent attacks and discovered weapons caches. Intelligence has highlighted the insurgents' frustration as to their restricted ability to operate effectively (the most recent rocket launches have landed several kilometers from the PRT). Current threat warnings and attacks, including the March 27 improvised explosive device (IED) attack that wounded three German soldiers, indicate a possible shift in insurgent tactics from

rockets to IEDs.

¶16. (SBU) While PRT Kunduz spent most of 2007 reacting to insurgents' efforts to disrupt the security in the province, in 2008 it has begun to regain the initiative. The new personnel have contributed to PRT security; however, a new forward-leaning military PRT commander is also to thank. He has been careful, however, not to lose sight of the goal of enabling the civilian elements to better complete their reconstruction and governance tasks.  
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